
***TEACH TENNESSEE* Licensure Policy**

The Background:

During the Department of Education's budget hearing both in December 2003 and 2004, Governor Bredesen expressed a keen interest in facilitating mid-career professionals to become licensed to teach in a streamlined manner. He followed up in his budget by allocating \$500,000 for seed money to begin a new program he called *Teach Tennessee* with the expectation that these teachers would be in the classroom by August, 2005.

In his 2004 State of the State Address the Governor explained that "*Teach Tennessee* will provide mid-career professionals with the opportunity to serve as teachers – especially in our most underserved rural and urban schools. Tennessee is the Volunteer State and I have met many Tennesseans who might be willing to spend five or ten years of their career working as teachers with our children and teenagers. We need to recruit them. We need to develop alternative certifications for them. And most of all... we need to get them into the classrooms. Funding the BEP and getting great teachers to come to stay in our classrooms is critical."

In December, 2004 the Department of Education awarded a two-year contract to MediaCross, Inc. to assist in reviewing and developing alternative licensure policy; marketing, recruiting, retaining and supporting *Teach Tennessee* teachers; and developing a web-based application system. MediaCross, Inc. began the process by surveying all forty institutions of higher education in Tennessee to determine how alternative licenses were awarded on their campuses and the candidates and problems they encountered.

Using input gathered from their surveys and research they had done on best practice alternative licensure in other states, MediaCross, Inc. worked with state staff to develop a draft proposal that was shared with a group of stakeholders at a meeting on March 4th. The group included teacher educators representing the UT system, TBR and private institutions; state staff; legislative research analysts from both the House and Senate Education Committees; and representatives from TEA, TSBA, TOSS, THEC, the Tennessee Business Roundtable and the State Board of Education.

The concept was next shared with the Advisory Council on Teacher Education and Certification and the Tennessee Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Comments, concerns and suggestions from all stakeholders were considered as the policy document was finalized. The attachment sets forth the key elements of the policy. The *Teach Tennessee* Licensure Policy provides another pathway to teacher preparation using the Alternative C License, in addition to the Board's existing policy, Alternative Preparation for Licensure (2002).

The Alternative C license will serve as the ‘umbrella’ under which *Teach Tennessee* will be one of two pathways to licensure. The other pathway will consist of programs operating under the policy Alternative Preparation for Licensure adopted by the Board in 2002. Upon successful completion of all requirements, a professional license will be awarded.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends acceptance of the *Teach Tennessee* licensure policy as outlined on final reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.

Teach Tennessee Licensure Policy
April 15, 2005

The purpose of the *Teach Tennessee* preparation for licensure is to enable highly qualified professionals to enter the teaching profession in grades 7-12 through an expedited pathway. Intensive pre-screening and a strong emphasis on mentoring and induction during the candidates' first years of teaching will be the focal points of this program.

I. Admissions/Eligibility

- A. Teach Tennessee candidates will be those individuals who demonstrate high achievement in their careers and possess the character, leadership, compassion, and motivation needed to be a successful teacher.
- B. To be considered eligible for the program, candidates shall possess or have met the following standards:
 - 1. A minimum of a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education in an area related to the subject the candidate intends to teach in grades 7-12.
 - 2. A minimum of five years of successful, relevant work experience in the subject matter to be taught. Current experience within three years of application to the program is preferred.
 - 3. A passing score on the Praxis I pre-professional skills test or the equivalent.
 - 4. A passing score on the Praxis II assessment for content knowledge in the subject area(s) in which the candidate seeks licensure OR completion of 24 credit hours in the content area the candidate intends to teach with a grade point average of 3.0 or higher (on a 4.0 scale).
 - 5. A passing score on the *Teach Tennessee* Assessment Profile screening process.
 - 6. Successfully passing a state/federal background check.
- C. Candidates will be excluded from the program for any of the following reasons:
 - 1. The applicant has had a teaching license revoked for any reason.
 - 2. The applicant, whose subject matter expertise is special education, is seeking a position as a special education teacher.

- D. Candidates will apply directly to the State Department of Education by submitting an application packet to include a portfolio of experiences.

II. Preparation

- A. *Teach Tennessee* preparation for licensure will consist of a *Teach Tennessee* Institute comprised of pre-service preparation incorporating the knowledge and skills specified for professional education as well as continuing professional growth and development during the first year of teaching.
- B. Higher education, State Department of Education, and K-12 personnel will collaboratively plan and deliver the program.
- C. The teacher will be issued an Alternative C License upon successful completion of the pre-service portion of an approved *Teach Tennessee* preparation program and upon the recommendation of the State Department of Education.
- D. During the first year of teaching, and up to three years if necessary, the teacher will receive the support of one or more trained mentors.
- E. The teacher will receive 40 hours of professional development the first year through a program collaboratively planned by the school system(s), the institution(s) of higher education, and the state. The professional development may be offered in various media, venue or times (evenings, weekends and/or summers).
- F. Candidates, with input from the Department of Education, institutions of higher education and local school systems, will create an Individual Professional Education Plan (IPEP) to plan their program of study.
- G. The school system in which the teacher is employed must make a commitment to carry out the program and provide mentoring support for the teacher. The mentor(s) will meet regularly with teachers to demonstrate effective classroom instruction, observe the teacher, coach the teacher, provide continuity with pre-service training, and provide formative evaluation. Support from mentors and other professional development will be at least the equivalent of four days per month.
- H. The teacher's professional development will include a seminar at the end of the first year. The program of study may continue during the summer following the first year of teaching.

III. Evaluation and Licensure

- A. The principal (or designee), with input from the mentor, will be responsible for evaluation of the teaching performance of the teacher.

- B. The teacher will attain full licensure as an apprentice teacher upon the recommendation by the school system in accordance with local evaluation procedures, and successful completion of all IPEP and testing requirements. Successful completion of the teaching experience by the teacher will count as one apprentice year.
- C. The Alternative C License may be reissued one time if the teacher has not completed all of the requirements within one year.
- D. After three successful years of teaching and a recommendation of the school system in accordance with local evaluation procedures, the teacher will obtain a professional license.

IV. *Teach Tennessee* Licensure Program

- A. The institution(s) of higher education, the State Department of Education, school system(s), and other stakeholders will collaboratively develop a plan for a *Teach Tennessee* licensure program which provides information regarding admissions procedures, format for the pre-service preparation program, continuing professional development and study for the first-year teacher, mentoring support and training of mentors, format for the concluding seminar, preparation program following the first year of teaching (if needed), and method of teacher assessment.

V. Program Review and Reporting

- A. The State Department of Education will evaluate annually the *Teach Tennessee* licensure program regarding the following: teacher recruitment, admission, preparation, placement, mentoring, performance and retention and will track program participants for five years. The Department will report the results of the program evaluation annually to the Governor and the State Board of Education.